



MAXIMUM SECURITY

GAMBIT

#23

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NICIEZA
PAQUETTE
PARSONS

EGO
GONE
MAD!



@alt.binaries.pictures.comics

PAQUETTE
PARSONS
2000
micnabb

REMY LEBEAU HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE OUTSIDER. ORPHANED AT BIRTH, HE WAS ADOPTED BY THE LEGENDARY THIEVES GUILD OF NEW ORLEANS WHO OFTEN SHUNNED HIM BECAUSE OF HIS STRANGE BURNING EYES. EVENTUALLY, HE REALIZED HE IS A MUTANT -- GIFTED AT BIRTH WITH THE ABILITY TO CHARGE INANIMATE OBJECTS WITH EXPLOSIVELY RELEASED BIOKINETIC ENERGY! HE'S CHARMING. HE'S DEADLY. STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MOST MYSTERIOUS X-MAN OF ALL!

GAMBIT

THE SKINNY: TWO WEEKS AGO, SHIPOARDS OF ALIENS WERE DUMPED ON THE PLANET EARTH --

PLEASE -- NOT -- ON A --

MMFF

-- FIRST -- DATE!

-- TURNING IT INTO A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON FOR THE FLOTSAM AND DREGS OF THE GALAXY!

AND IF THAT DIDN'T MAKE FOR WORSE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS --

-- GOOD OL' EARTH HAS BECOME A WOMB FOR THE BIRTH OF A MASSIVE CREATURE!

SPECIFICALLY A SPORE DERIVED FROM EGO, THE LIVING PLANET -- AND IT IS SLOWLY DEVOURING THE PLANET LIKE IVY --

-- INCLUDING NEW ORLEANS, THE HOME OF OUR HERO, REMY LEBEAU -- THE X-MAN OTHERWISE KNOWN AS GAMBIT!

SHELL GAME

A MAXIMUM SECURITY ADVENTURE!

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RS & Comicraft's Troy Peteri letters ♦ **Mike Raicht** assistant ego ♦ **Mike Marts** ego ♦ **Joe Quesada** ego in chief

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NOW
REMY KNOWS
WHAT A GIRL
FEELS LIKE ON
A DATE WIT'
HIM!

DIS IS
RIDICULOUS,
BELLA DONNA!

PLACE
LOOKS WORSE
THAN DURING
MARDI
GRAS!

FIGHTING ALONGSIDE REMY ARE MEMBERS
OF THE NEW ORLEANS UNIFIED GUILD OF
THIEVES AND ASSASSINS --

-- BELLA DONNA BOUDREAUX
(REMY'S EX-WIFE) --

-- EMIL LAPIN --

-- AND MERCY LEBEAU
(REMY'S SISTER-IN-LAW).



I GOTTA AGREE WIT'
MERCY! EVEN WITH MY
INCREASED MUTANT
POWERS --

-- I COULDN'
POSSIBLY
BIOKINETICALLY
CHARGE ENOUGH OF
EGO'S MATTER
T' STOP ITS
GROWTH!



THEN
HOW ABOUT
WE JUS' WORRY
'BOUT NAWLINS?



'SIDES, I
HAVEN' HAD
THIS GOOD A
WORKOUT --

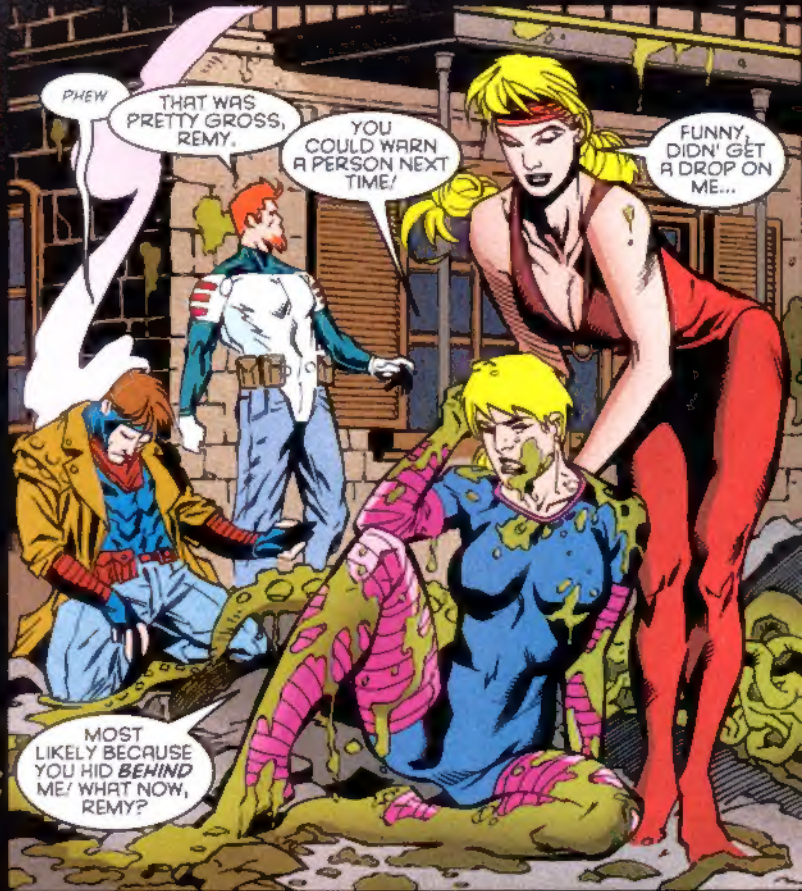


-- IN
MONTHS!



... IT MUST BE RELEASED!

BOOM



PHEW

THAT WAS PRETTY GROSS, REMY.

YOU COULD WARN A PERSON NEXT TIME!

FUNNY, DIDN' GET A DROP ON ME...

MOST LIKELY BECAUSE YOU HID BEHIND ME! WHAT NOW, REMY?



I CAN'T DO THIS BLOCK BY BLOCK OR IT'LL KILL ME...

... AND I ONLY CAME DOWN HERE T' HELP OUT BETWEEN PITCHIN' IN WIT' TH' X-MEN.

THIS MESS IS A WHOLE LOT MORE'N WE CAN EXPECT T' HANDLE.

AN' TAKIN' OUT RONAN, TH' KREE WARDEN IN CHARGE OF PRISON EARTH, IS GON' TAKE BIG GUNS LIKE TH' AVENGERS OR TH' FANTASTIC FOUR...

... NOT A BUNCHA THIEVES AN' ASSASSINS FROM NAWLINS!

YOU'RE
RIGHT, BEL,
THIS ISN'T THE
KINDA THING TH'
GUILD IS USED
T' DEALIN'
WIT'...

... BUT ALL
TH' ANCIENT
PROPHECIES
OUR TWO GUILDS
UNIFIED FOR WON'T
MEAN DIDDY-
SQUAT --

-- IF THIS
EGO-SPORE
EATS UP TH'
WHOLE PLANET,
N'EST CES
PASS?



WE RATHER GET
TH' POINT, REM --
THAT IS WHY WE'RE
OUT HERE, ISN'T
IT?

BUT MERCY MADE
A GOOD POINT,
AS WELL...

... THIS KIND
OF OVERT ACTIVITY
WILL COMPROMISE
TH' GUILD'S ABILITY T'
SECRETLY OPERATE IN
NAWLINS TH' WAY WE
HAVE FOR HUNDREDS
OF YEARS!



LIFE IS CHANGE, BEL.
THE GUILD'S UNIFYIN'
AN' ME LEADIN' 'EM
SHOULD ATTEST T'
THAT, HUH?

HERE, LET
ME GET
THAT.

... YOU BARELY
SURVIVED TH'
VOTE T' KEEP YOU
AS OUR PATRIARCH,
REMY. DON' PUSH
YOUR LUCK.



KIDDO, PUSHIN'
MY LUCK IS ALL I'VE
DONE MY ENTIRE LIFE!



WELL, PER'APS WE MADE THE **WRONG** DECISION...

SO YOU GON' GO BLOCK BY BLOCK BLOWIN' UP THIS THING UNTIL YOUR OWN HEAD POPS OFF?

NOT MY PREFERENCE, REALLY -- BUT **LOOK AROUND**, BEL -- DO WE HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE?

WE COULD PRETEND IT AIN' HAPPENIN' AN' GO TAKE DE JEWELS OUTTA DE **EPURER** HOUSE OVER THERE...

DON' MAKE ME GIVE YOU A TIME-OUT, EMIL...



PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU?

WHAT IN THE --?!

VERY SUBTLE, MERC...



MY NAME IS **HETH'SA** OF THE PLANET **CULTH**...

...THOUGH YOU MIGHT BE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE TERRAN NAME THAT HAS APPARENTLY BEEN GIVEN TO MY UNIFORM...

...THE **X-CUTIONER!**

INTERLUDE

The New Sun diary.

The newborn with the **red eyes** was abandoned in a New Orleans hospital and taken days later by the **Thieves Guild**.

The prophecy was the **same** here as on **my** world, though the circumstances of his **upbringing** were vastly different than mine.

Heredity vs. Environment.
An eternal conundrum...

INTERLUDE 2

WASHINGTON D.C.

JACOB GAVIN JR. IS THE COURIER, AN INTERNATIONAL MESSENGER WHOSE MUTANT SHAPE-SHIFTING BASE BODY IS NOW FROZEN AS A WOMAN.

GLORIA DAYNE IS FONTANELLE, A MUTANT DREAM THERAPIST.

BOTH ARE HELPING REMY TO UNCOVER THE SECRETS OF HIS PAST AS A MEANS TO UNDERSTANDING THE NEW SON'S EXISTENCE.

CLUES ABOUND, BUT SOLUTIONS DON'T...

WE GOT BLACK WOMB, A GOVERNMENT SPONSORED COVERT GENETIC RESEARCH LAB --

-- RUN BY AMANDA MUELLER -- A WOMAN WHO WAS YOUR MOTHER.

A WOMAN I HAVEN'T SEEN IN DECADES, BY THE WAY.

AND A WOMAN REMY AND I MET BACK IN 1891!

MAKING HER OLDER THAN DIRT BEFORE SHE EVEN GAVE BIRTH TO YOU!

AND WE GOT NEW SON, WHO IS AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF REMY, BUT MUCH MORE POWERFUL -- AND WHEN YOU WERE WORKING FOR HIM...

... HE ORDERED YOU TO DREAMSCAPE PEOPLE WHO'D HAD EXPERIENCES WITH BLACK WOMB YEARS AGO.

BUT WHY? IS HE REMY'S TWIN BROTHER? HIS CLONE?

I SCREAM CLONES.

WHAT?

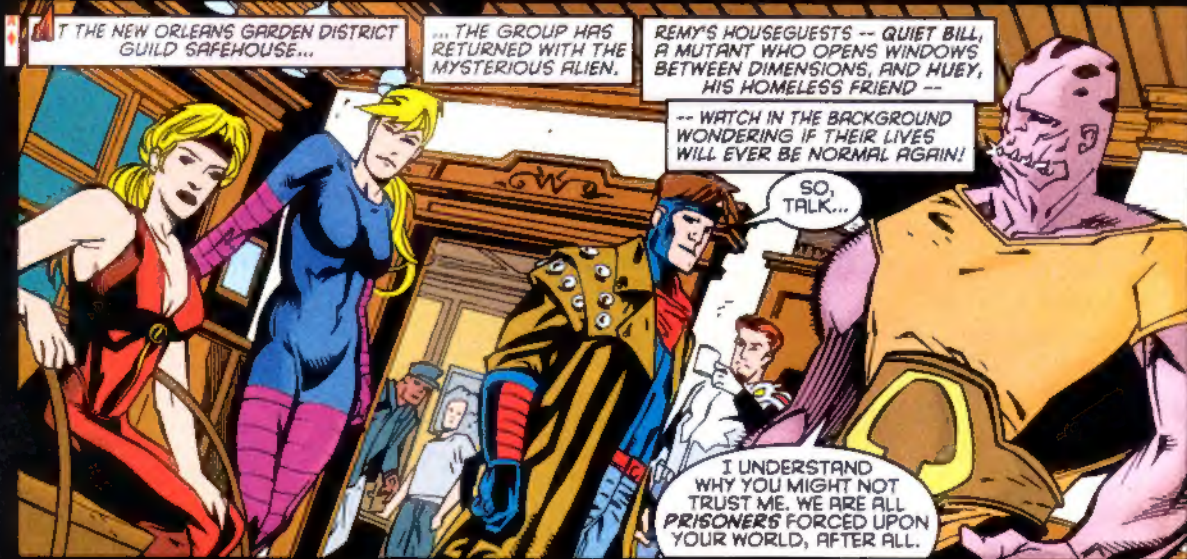
NEVER MIND. SO, YOUR BEST GUESS?

CLONE OR TWIN, NEW SON WAS EITHER BORN AS A RESULT OF THE BLACK WOMB PROGRAM AND RAISED SEPARATELY FROM REMY --

-- OR NEW SON IS AN ALTERNATE EARTH VARIATION OF REMY AND HE NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES IN THEIR UPBRINGINGS.

ONLY TWO WAYS TO FIND OUT WHICH. FIND BLACK WOMB OR FIND NEW SON!

SOME CHOICE! THE DEVIL YOU KNOW OR THE DEVIL YOU DON'T...



AT THE NEW ORLEANS GARDEN DISTRICT
GUILD SAFEHOUSE...

... THE GROUP HAS
RETURNED WITH THE
MYSTERIOUS ALIEN.

REMY'S HOUSEGUESTS -- QUIET BILL,
A MUTANT WHO OPENS WINDOWS
BETWEEN DIMENSIONS, AND HUEY,
HIS HOMELESS FRIEND --

-- WATCH IN THE BACKGROUND
WONDERING IF THEIR LIVES
WILL EVER BE NORMAL AGAIN!

SO,
TALK...

I UNDERSTAND
WHY YOU MIGHT NOT
TRUST ME. WE ARE ALL
PRISONERS FORCED UPON
YOUR WORLD, AFTER ALL.

BUT BEFORE I BECAME
A PRISONER, I
PRESIDED OVER
THEM!

I WAS A SECURITY
OFFICER ON AN
ORBITAL PENITENTIARY
ABOVE MY HOME
PLANET CULTH.

WE WORE
ARMOR FROM
WHICH THE MUTANT
BOUNTY HUNTER,
X-CUTIONER, CULLED HIS
WEAPONRY.

"YEARS AGO, WE HAD A
RIOT ON THE STATION. WE
WERE OVERWHELMED...

"... AND I... I... PANICKED --
I ABANDONED MY POST --
MY COWORKERS --

"I WAS TRIED AND
CONVICTED OF
COWARDICE, BUT SOME
MERCY WAS SHOWN
ME -- I COULD NOT BE
PLACED IN A CULTHAN
JAIL --

"-- ALL OF WHOM DIED
STANDING THEIR GROUND
DURING THE FIGHTING.

"-- SO I WAS
TRANSFERRED
TO A SHI'AR
PENAL SYSTEM
INSTEAD...

"... SERVING MY SENTENCE THERE UNTIL OUR ENTIRE OUTPOST WAS RELOCATED TO EARTH --

"-- WHERE I USED EQUIPMENT MADE AVAILABLE TO ME AS ONE OF RONAN'S WARDENS --

"-- TO LEARN OF YOUR RECENT BATTLE WITH THE X-CUTIONER ON THE STREETS OF THE CITY YOU CALL NEW YORK."

CAN'T HELP YOU, BIG GUY, X-C CRASHED INTO TH' EAST RIVER AN' I WAS IN NO CONDITION TO GO DIVIN' FOR HIM!

I WAS ABLE TO TRACK THE ARMOR'S TELEPORT SEQUENCING.

I KNOW WHERE IT IS, BUT NOT HOW TO ACQUIRE IT.

AN' YOU WANT MY HELP? USE A THIEF T' CATCH A THUG?

WHY?

THERE MAY BE COMPONENTS WITHIN THE ARMOR THAT CAN TELEPORT ME HOME AGAIN --

-- WHERE I CAN TRY TO MAKE AMENDS FOR WHAT I DID WRONG!

DAT TELLS US WHAT YOU GET OUT OF IT... WHAT ABOUT US?



THE ARMOR SYSTEM HAS A DATABASE THAT CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT MAY HELP YOUR ECOSYSTEM SLOW DOWN THE GROWTH OF EGO...

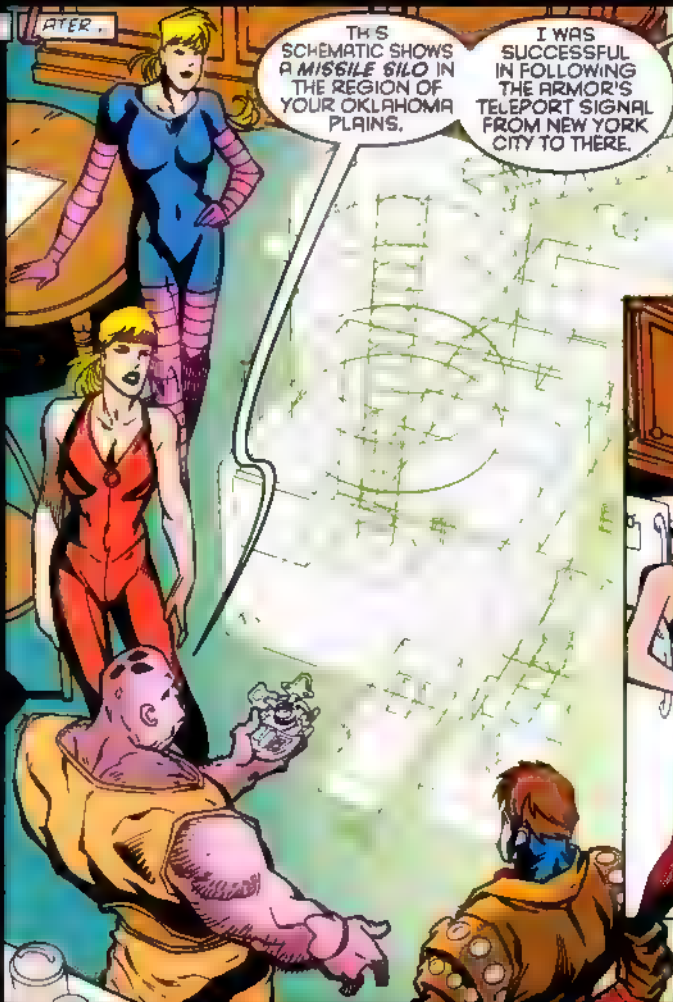
...DATA SPECIFICALLY COLLECTED BY THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY.



WHICH WE CAN SELL T' ANY PARTY WILLIN' T' PAY --

OKAY, OKAY, YOU REALLY DID TURN OUT TO BE A BOY SCOUT, DIDN'T YOU?

WHERE DID DE GUILD GO WRONG?



LATER

THIS SCHEMATIC SHOWS A MISSILE SILO IN THE REGION OF YOUR OKLAHOMA PLAINS.

I WAS SUCCESSFUL IN FOLLOWING THE ARMOR'S TELEPORT SIGNAL FROM NEW YORK CITY TO THERE.

BUT I AM UNABLE TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO ACCESS THE SITE WITHOUT FEAR OF ALERTING AUTHORITIES.

OR TRIGGERING A COUPLE OF NUKES? NOW DIS IS WHAT I CALL FUN!



JUS' AS BAD AS TH' TIME YOU CONNED ME INTO STEALIN' THAT JET PLANE...

YEAH, AN' LOOK HOW WELL THAT TURNED OUT!

WE CRASHED TH' PLANE!

EXACTLY! LIKE EMIL SAID, FUN TIME!

INTERLUDE

New Sun diary

In this issue, Remy lost control of the raging biokinetic energies within him.

He lacked my formal preparation. In desperation, he turned to biogeneticist called Sinister.

who effected vch lobotomize him, reverting his powers to a level Remy could control.

DON' KNOW
WHAT'S MAKIN'
ME MORE
DELIRIOUS --

-- THE BLOOD
RUSHIN' T' MY
HEAD --

HE WAS
TALKIN' ABOUT
OUR TSA,
BEL!

-- OR THE
VIEW!

THE SILO
IS IMPRESSIVE.
NEH?

HARD AS
IT IS T BELIEVE
DIS COM N FROM
ME, BUT COULD
WE PLEASE ACT LIKE
PROFESSIONALS
HERE?!

EMIL LAPIN,
THE GUILD
COMPUTER
SPECIALIST
HACKED INTO
THE SILO'S
SECURITY
LOCKS

OH
FUNNY
FOR REMY T' BE
FLIRTIN'.

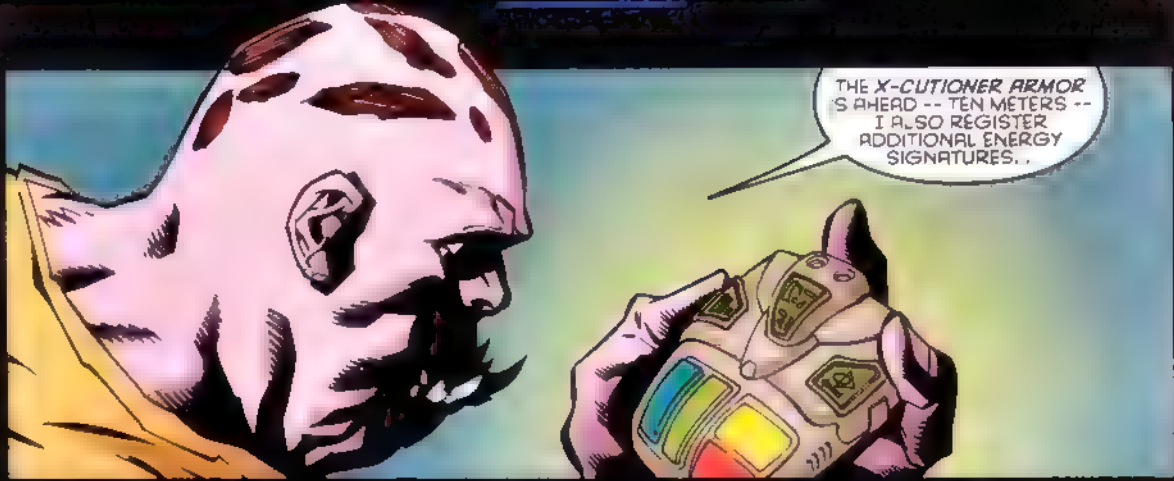
BEIN' AS
HOW WE'RE
INSIDE A NUKE
SHACK?

NOM,
BEIN' AS HOW
HE FLINCHES
EV'RYTIME I
COME WITHIN
A FOOT OF
HIM!

BOY'S
ALL BARK, NO
BITE

HETH'SA'S SCOUT
SHIP FLEW THEM
THERE IN FIFTEEN
MINUTES.

PSO
FACTO



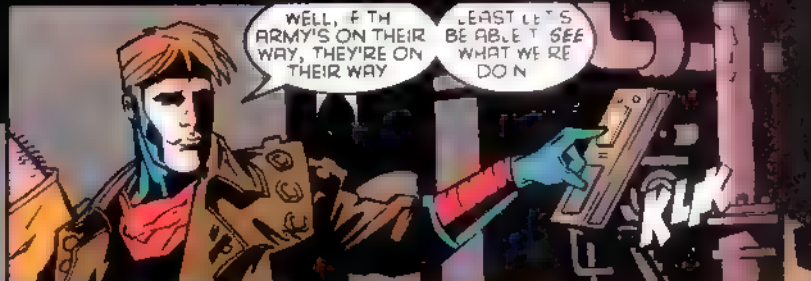
SHUFF

GOOD
NO LOUD
CLANGIN
NOISES

WOULDN'T
SUCH AN
ALARM BE
SILENT?

Uh, yoh.
I WAS JUS
KIDDIN'.

Ah,
THE ARMOR
SIGNAL IS
STRAIGHT
AHEAD.



WELL, IF TH
ARMY'S ON THEIR
WAY, THEY'RE ON
THEIR WAY

LEAST LET'S
BE ABLE T SEE
WHAT WE'RE
DOIN

KLK



NOW I
KNOW WHERE
MY TAX MONEY
GOES.

EMIL, YOU
AIN'T PAID TAXES
YOUR WHOLE
LIFE!

AN
NOW I
KNOW
WHY!

HETH SA --P

THE
ARMOR
APPEARS
TO BE IN A
GRAVIMETRIC
STASIS
SHELL.

WAS YOUR
COUNTRY'S MILITARY
SAFEGUARDING
IT?

NOT TH
ORIGINAL ONE.
MAYBE THIS ONE
I DON KNOW

NEVER
FOUND OUT WHO
WAS WEARIN' IT IN
NEW YORK

INTERLUDE

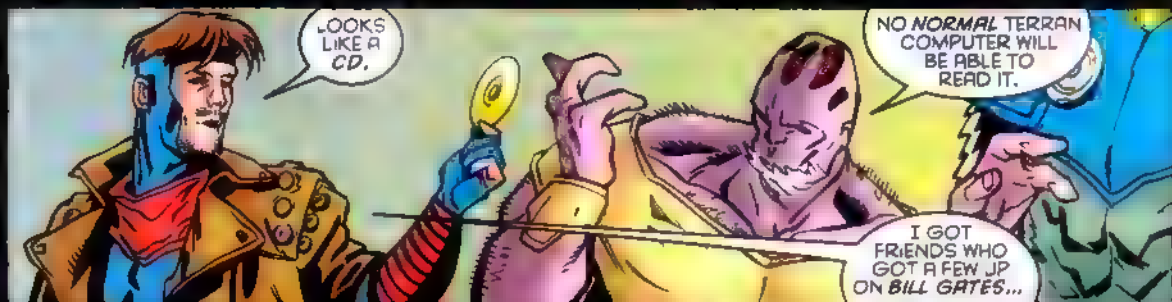
A. A. Sun-001

Storage vault's
accessed by Federal Agent
at. Data has been accessed.

The A. A. Sun-001 armor
is the Assassination Game
armor. It is meant as a fuse to
keep the A. A. balance.



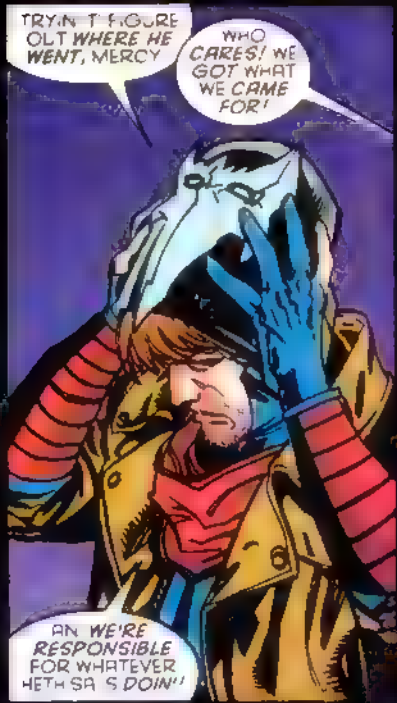
Wouldn't prefer he not learn the
intimate breadth and scope of
his country's military secrets.





SON OF A--

WHAT'RE YOU DOIN', REMY?



TRYIN' T FIGURE OUT WHERE HE WENT, MERCY

WHO CARES! WE GOT WHAT WE CAME FOR!

AN WE'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHATEVER HETH SA'S DOIN'!

TERRAN NEURAL SYSTEMS
INTERFACE ESTABLISHED

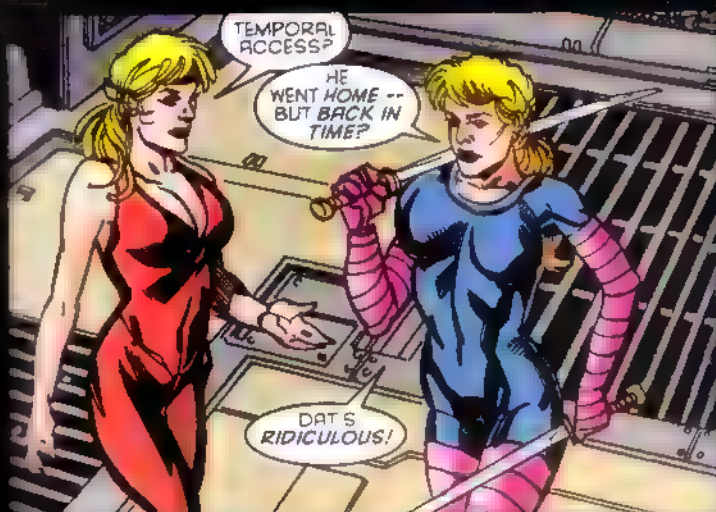
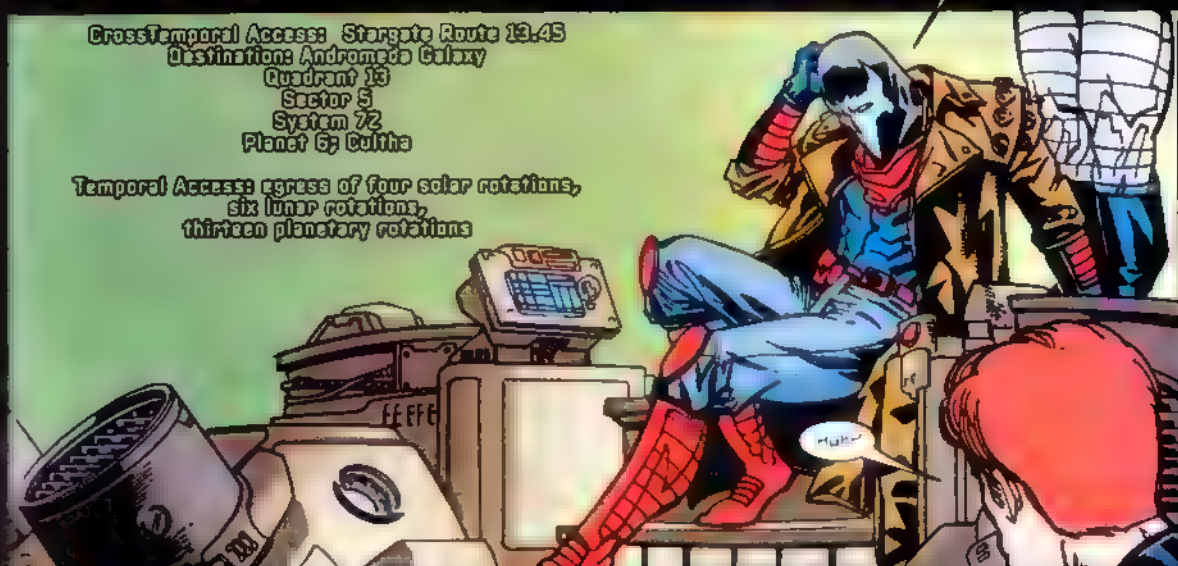
Status: Operational

Pending Operator
Request:

LIST PREVIOUS
TELEPORTATION
DESTINATION.

CrossTemporal Access: Stargate Route 12.45
Destinations: Andromeda Galaxy
Quadrant 13
Sector 5
System 72
Planet 6; Gultia

Temporal Access: egress of four solar rotations,
six lunar rotations,
thirteen planetary rotations



TEMPORAL
ACCESS?

HE
WENT HOME --
BUT BACK IN
TIME?

THAT'S
RIDICULOUS!



WELL, ME
TO MY JAY
JOB

HE'S GONET!
CHANGE TH
DEC S ONS HE'S
MADE

SOP



REMY HAS SEEN
PLENTY OF PRISON
RIOTS BEFORE.

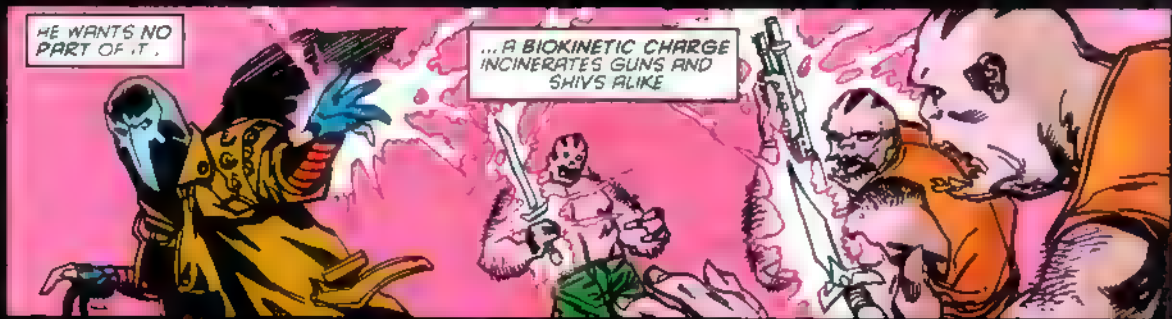
ON TV AND IN
THE MOVIES.

HE EVEN LED ONE
WHEN HE WAS
SEVENTEEN.

SPRUNG HIMSELF AND TWO DRUNKS
FROM A CLOSET JAIL CELL IN SOME
PODUNK BAYOU SMALL TOWN

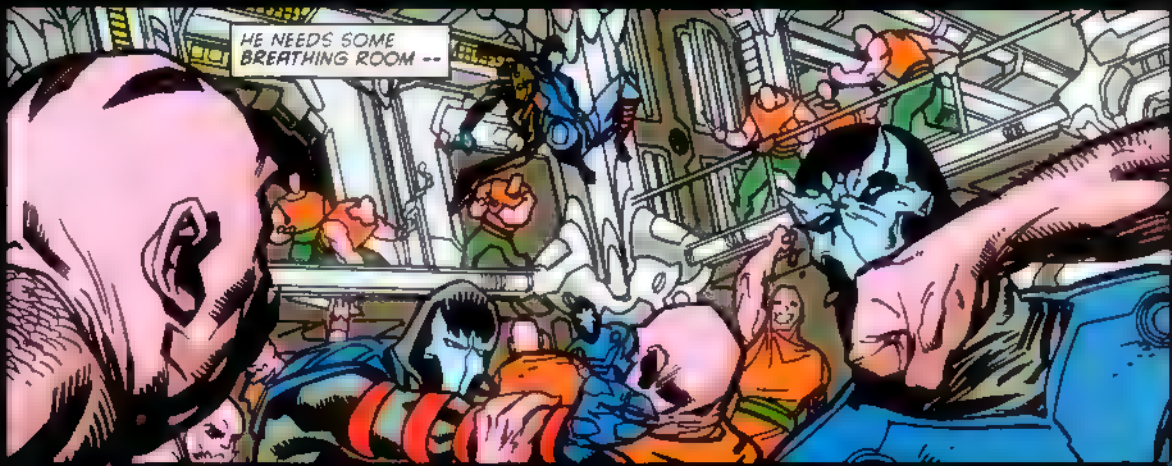
BUT NONE OF THAT COULD
APPROXIMATE THE CARNAGE
AND BRUTALITY HE SEES IN
FRONT OF HIM NOW

THE SCENT OF CULTHAN BLOOD,
SOUNDS OF PANICKED SHOUTS
AND TEARING FLESH.

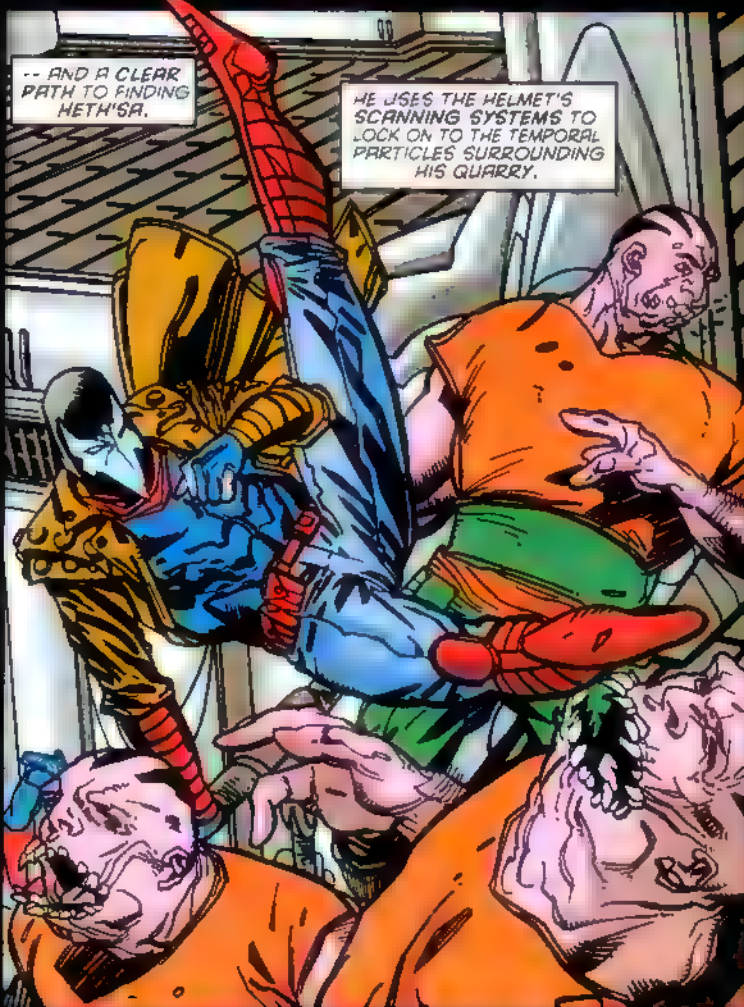


HE WANTS NO PART OF IT.

...A BIOKINETIC CHARGE INCINERATES GUNS AND SHIVS ALIKE



HE NEEDS SOME BREATHING ROOM --



-- AND A CLEAR PATH TO FINDING HETH'SA.

HE USES THE HELMET'S SCANNING SYSTEMS TO LOCK ON TO THE TEMPORAL PARTICLES SURROUNDING HIS QUARRY.



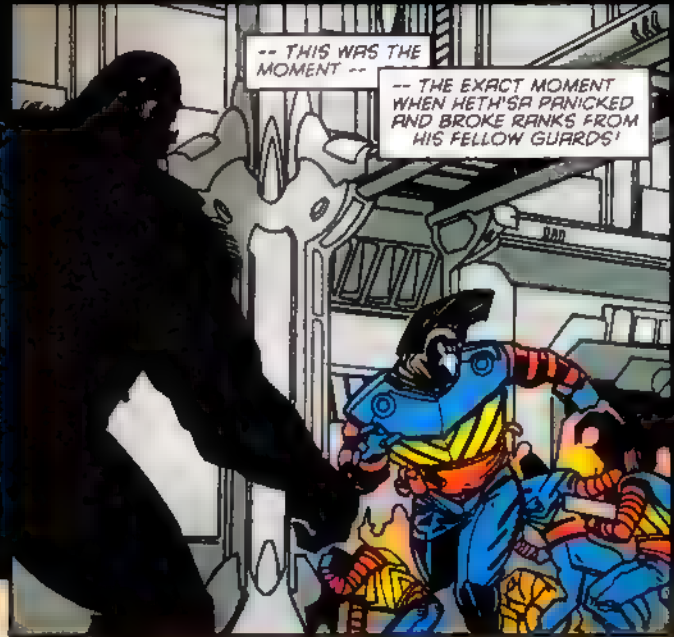
ONCE HE HAS LOCATED HETH'SA THE HELMET COMES OFF.

IT FELT AWKWARD AND SMELLED OF OZONE.



THE CULT HAN GUARD LOOKS
SCARED -- RELIVING OLD
NIGHTMARES

REMY KNOWS --
UNDERSTANDS
PEOPLE -- EVEN
ALIENS --



-- THIS WAS THE
MOMENT --

-- THE EXACT MOMENT
WHEN HETH'SA PANICKED
AND BROKE RANKS FROM
HIS FELLOW GUARDS!



REMY CAN STOP
HIM EASILY BUT...

... HE WANTS TO SEE IT
PLAY ITSELF OUT FIRST...



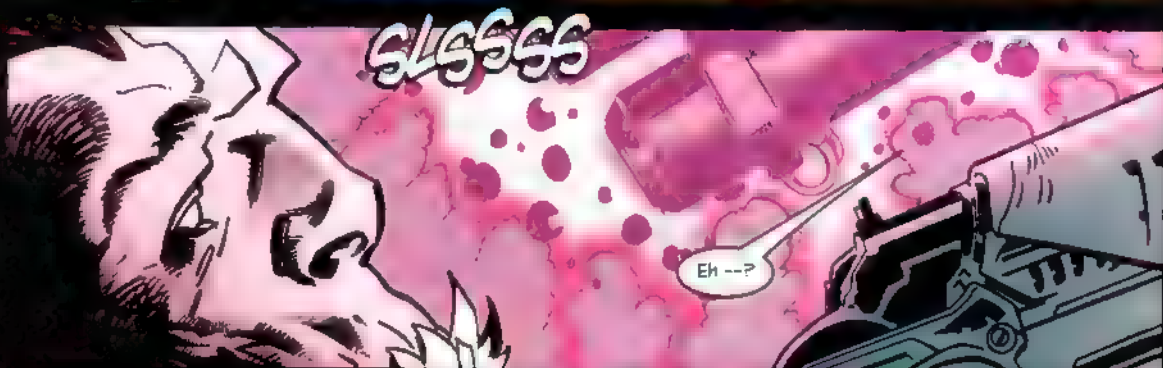
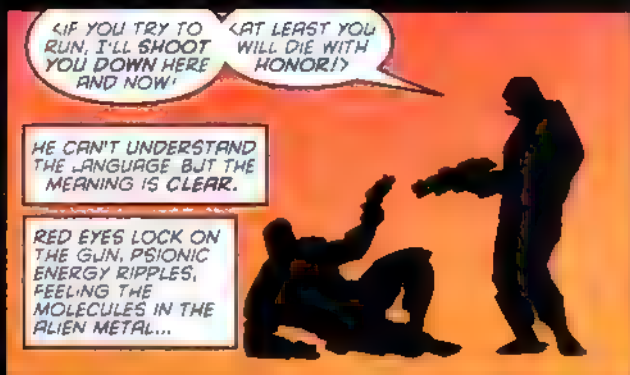
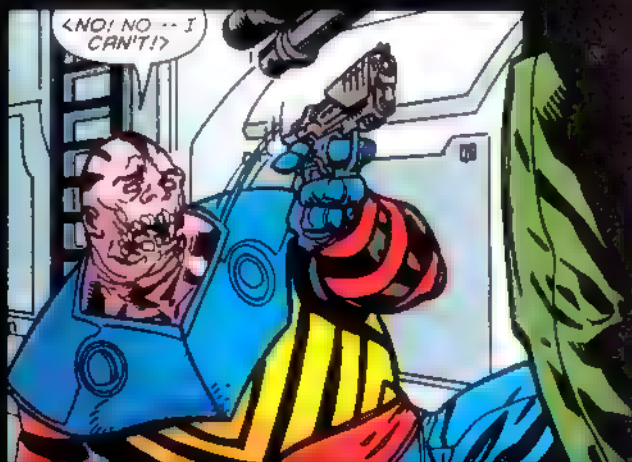
.. AND SEE
WHAT KIND
OF DECISION
HETH'SA IS
GOING TO
MAKE...



<WHO --P
HOW -->

<I AM
YOU! FOUR
MISERABLE
YEARS
LATER.
<GET BACK
IN THERE AND
FIGHT!>

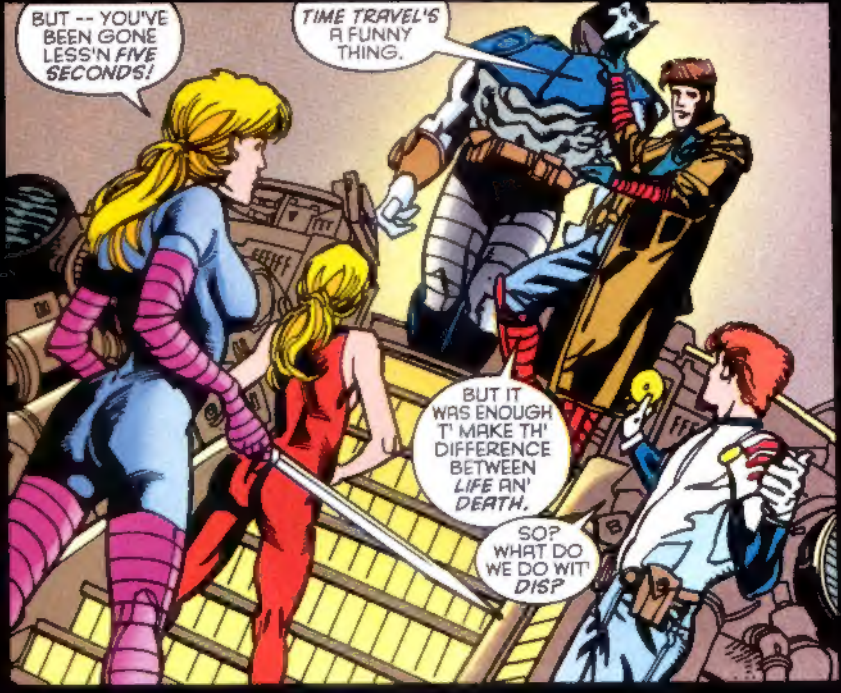
<BUT --
BUT IF I DO --
I'LL DIE!>





CHIK
SKREEEEEEEEEEEE







THE
ANSWER IS
ME!

New Sun diary.

The time has come to invite you
to a very special event, Remy --
the *salvation* of planet Earth --

-- to be brought on
by your death!

FINALLY
AT LAST - THE
CLIMACTIC
CONCLUSION
OF THE
NEW SUN
SAGA!

DEALER'S CHOICE

Dear Dealer's Choice,

Thank you, thank you, thank you! As one of Gambit's biggest fans, I found GAMBIT #16 well worth the wait. He's the reason that I began to read X-MEN again after a brief period away from comics altogether. I liked the idea of the X-Men having a Cajun on board, but the one thing that I didn't like was how the secrets from his past always got thrown in his face. Even though he risked his life and limbs like everyone else, it was easy to dismiss him and leave him to die in Antarctica. The changes to Remy's powers in GAMBIT #16 were secondary to him finally saying how he felt about being left to die and the double standards that his teammates applied to him. Fabian Nicieza wrote the argument between Remy and Rogue perfectly. So perfectly, in fact, that it had me jumping up and down, pumping my fists in the air.

I'm also excited about the other new twist in the ragin' Cajun's life, that being the new patriarch of the Thieves Guild. I'm curious to see what happened to Jean-Luc and what is going to happen with Bella Donna and her contract on Remy.

Keep up the good work, *mes amis*, 'cause dis is getting good.

Mike Sallier
msallier@aol.com

We'll definitely do our level best, Mike. How could we do less for someone we've lured back into the hobby? Welcome back.

We're glad you're enjoying the bombast surrounding some of Remy's still-controversial recent history. The desertion of Remy in Antarctica continues to be a hot-button topic, which should only intensify with the impending arrival—in just two short months—of new GAMBIT scribe Scott Lobdell!

Dear Dealer's Choice,

Now, I know you guys have probably heard this hundreds of times (and rightly so), but yes, I am yet another humble Gambit fanatic. Let me just say that the series so far has not only solidified my love for the ragin' Cajun, but also for writer Fabian Nicieza. Talk about a man who can mix angst and comedy in an explosive blend! He does ol' Gumbo proud.

All right, on to the point of my letter to you. I've just read issue #16 and, yes, color me confused. First of all, what happened to Remy's dad? Please, don't tell me that Jean-Luc has gone to that great big guild in the sky! He's an awesome character, and the scenes between him and Remy are classic examples of fatherly love under strain. Also, how exactly did Remy and Jacob get back from the past? I'm still unclear on that point.

However, the one part I did enjoy is that there is finally an end to the Remy and Rogue angst

relationship. Yes, I realize many fans believe they are meant to be together, but c'mon! Rogue will never trust Remy completely, and that's what real love is all about. Besides, you don't dump someone you love in the middle of Antarctica. At least Bella Donna is direct enough to just want to knife her former husband!

On a final note, yes, I know many people suggest other team-ups, but still ... how about a Gambit/Jubilee pairing? Talk about two characters who have all the makings of a great team! The Cajun and the firecracker always had good scenes together in the past, and as the two loners whom no one really understands, they would have a good basis for understanding.

Lauren Griffin
Newark, DE
wrengrif@udel.edu

We hope you caught sight of Jean-Luc in GAMBIT 2000, so you'll know that he's at least still drawing breath. As to what he's been up to all this time, well, we're still keeping a tight lid on that one. Part of the reasoning behind the "six-month gap" in all the X-Men family "Revolution" titles was to create mysteries and suspense that would have all of fandom begging for answers. Looks like it worked!

Hiya, folks!

"The more things change," indeed! A number of intriguing revelations this issue—though I of course knew about Remy 'n' Rogue's breakup (I really like the way you expanded upon it here; it seems all-too-logical following the events of this issue) and Remy being the new patriarch of the Thieves Guild from having read X-MEN #100.

I like the new developments with Remy's powers. Dunno if you'll ever get me to like Bella Donna much, though, but the scene with Zaran and Batroc was priceless. It was somehow strangely appropriate, though, that it was Bullseye who dealt the "fatal" blow.

I hope you intend to explain precisely how Remy and Jacob got back to the present at some point, as that was left kind of vague this time around. Something to do with these new developments with Remy's powers, it seems, but what? And this isn't the first time it's happened. As this has something to do with the contents of that phial, I guess answers will be forthcoming in time.

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You guess correctly, Paul! What you characterize as being "vague" is, in actuality, a carefully planned and plotted story point, engineered specifically to whip all you GAMBIT fans into a speculative frenzy! (Either that, or we just a bit vague, take your pick.)

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